



# Northern Illinois University

**2019 Program Review Report**

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**Reporting Institution:** Northern Illinois University  
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**Contact Person:** Dr. Carolinda Douglass  
**Telephone:** 815.753.0492  
**Email:** [cdoug@niu.edu](mailto:cdoug@niu.edu)

**Program:** M.A.T. (13.0101)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) with a Specialization in Elementary Education with Initial Licensure prepares students with bachelor's degrees in any field to sit for the Professional Educator License in first- through sixth-grade in Illinois schools. As an approved licensure program in the state, coursework and field experiences are governed by mandates found in the Illinois Administrative Code. These mandates identify standards related to curricular areas, human growth and development, planning and instruction, professionalism; requirements of coursework in three areas of the sciences (i.e., physical, life, and earth and space), as well as the applicable tests that students must pass (i.e., basic/foundational skills, content-area tests, and the teacher performance assessment) for licensure in the state. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, elementary education teachers work in public and private schools and job growth in this field is projected at three percent (slower than average) from 2018 to 2028.
- Major findings and recommendations: The program provides an opportunity for students who have not completed a B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education to access an alternative route to becoming elementary education teachers in Illinois. Therefore, it is not the primary route for individuals who wish to become elementary education teachers and enrollments are expected to be lower than for an elementary education program at the bachelor's level. Enrollments in the program, while low, have been increasing over time. In 2018-2019, seven graduates of the program were employed as elementary education teachers in Illinois. The program is offered to two rotating off-campus cohorts, one at NIU Rockford and one at NIU Naperville. The department is currently exploring other partnerships with school districts and outreach opportunities. Assessment of student learning outcomes over the review period have been consistently reported and the program appears to be using assessment data for program improvement plans. The program is recommended to work with NIU's Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications to improve recruitment materials, specifically promoting job placement success.
- Actions taken since the last review: A number of circumstances have arisen since the time of the last review of this program in 2012-2013. Among these are a high level of turnover in departmental leadership; changes in state administrative code; faculty attrition through retirement, movement or loss (i.e., six faculty members have left the department in the last two years); and the hiring of faculty with new skill sets. The program is seeing a shift in focus to one that is more responsive to the ever-changing demands and needs of elementary

education teachers and schools. Some of the students enrolled in the M.A.T. program are “career changers” who have worked in one or more other fields and now seek pathways to become elementary education teachers. Others are paraprofessionals or aides in the classroom and desire to be regular classroom teachers. Other students have an emergency licensure within bilingual education, which requires the students to get their Professional Educator License within a limited period of time. The program works through comprehensive advising to address the needs of all students in the program.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the findings of this program review, the program has planned three initiatives for program improvement of the M.A.T.: (1) program area faculty will explore options for a blended delivery of hybrid and online system for the M.A.T. program; peer and home institution models will be examined for feasibility of implementation; (2) recruitment efforts will be increased to include exploring direct admission possibilities with community college working partners, hosting open-houses on NIU campus and community college sites, and development of a systematic evaluation system to determine recruitment outcomes based on numbers of enrolled students by recruitment effort; and (3) marketing and communication efforts will be increased to promote greater marketing visibility.

## **Outcome**

- Decision:

\_\_\_x\_\_\_ Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation cycle).

Explanation: The Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) with a Specialization in Elementary Education with Initial Licensure provides a viable alternative route for individuals wishing to become elementary education teachers. While enrollments are low, the program has successful graduates, consistent assessment of student learning outcomes, and is working on improving recruitment efforts.

**Program**: M.S.Ed. in Higher Education and Student Affairs (formally the M.S.Ed. in Adult and Higher Education) (13.0403)

## Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) in Adult and Higher Education program in 2016 underwent extensive curricular revisions to include two specializations, one in Higher Education, and another in Adult Education. In 2019, the President approved a name change for the program and it is currently designated as the M.S.Ed. in Higher Education and Student Affairs in the university catalog. This program prepares students for a variety of leadership and administrative positions in student affairs and higher education. It involves mandatory internship experiences in local or national settings, covering at least 120 hours of field experience. Several student affairs units within

the university (e.g., Admissions, Career Services, Diversity and Cultural Resource Centers, Housing and Residential Services, Greek Life, Student Conduct, etc.) support graduate assistantships and student field experiences for enrolled students, thus providing opportunities for real-world and hands-on experiences to these students. Program graduates are employed as postsecondary administrators who oversee student services, academic supports, and faculty research in public and private colleges and universities. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, job growth in fields related to postsecondary higher education is projected at seven percent (faster than average) from 2018 to 2028.

- Major findings and recommendations: Current review of the program indicated that although the number of degrees conferred by the program has held steady (30 in 2013 to 29 in 2017), enrollments have declined from 77 in 2013 to 55 in 2017. The program is committed to diversity in terms of its curricular offerings (e.g., offers a standalone course in diversity and social justice), faculty diversity (e.g., half of the faculty identify as faculty of color and there is diverse representation of gender), and student diversity. Most recently in 2017, 45 percent of students identified as white non-Hispanic, 20 percent as Hispanic, and 22 percent as African-American non-Hispanic. Females represented 65 percent of enrollment, a trend similar to previous years. Alumni outcomes during the last four years indicate that full-time employment for program graduates ranges between 85 and 93 percent. Alumni communicated satisfaction with time to degree (95 to 100 percent) and overall satisfaction with the degree program (above 85 percent during the past four years). During the program's external review in 2017, the reviewers acknowledged the high quality of this master's program and noted that the addition of the social change curriculum would likely enhance the visibility of the program. The external reviewers recommended developing an advisory or alumni board to assist with vision planning. The program is encouraged to continue its focus on increasing enrollments and improving assistantship opportunities with other units on campus to provide greater interdisciplinary experiences to students.
- Actions taken since the last review: Quality improvement activities that have taken place since the last review have consisted of curricular revision (e.g., using ePortfolios to assess student learning outcomes), course sequencing through revised curricular mapping, and the use of a cohort model. In response to a shift in interest, the program now focuses on higher education and student affairs administration and, thus, faculty with this expertise have been recruited and hired.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program intends to increase graduate assistantship opportunities for enrolled students by working internally with units across Student Affairs and extending partnerships with external institutions. The program intends to continue providing innovative assignments and course delivery options to stay current with professional trends. Finally, the program intends to continue monitoring its revised student learning outcomes and assessment practices in order to inform decisions for quality improvement at the curricular and programmatic levels.

## Outcome

- Decision:

\_\_x\_\_ Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Master of Science in Education in Adult and Higher Education program, now cataloged as the Master of Science in Education in Higher Education and Student Affairs, is committed to diversity in terms of its curricular offerings, and faculty and student diversity, as it prepares future postsecondary professionals. Graduates of the program report strong student outcomes in terms of jobs and high satisfaction levels with degree preparedness for these jobs. The program recently revised their student learning outcomes to align these closely with professional standards in higher education and student affairs.

**Program:** Ed.D. in Higher Education (formally the Ed.D. in Adult and Higher Education) (13.0403)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) in Higher Education prepares working professionals to advance their careers in the areas of instruction, educational policy, administration, and research. Enrolled students may choose one of two focus areas, the college teaching track or the higher education administration track. Graduates are employed in leadership roles in a variety of postsecondary contexts including student affairs, academic affairs, and other areas of higher education administration such as teaching faculty roles. Offered as a three-year weekend executive cohort program with face-to-face and online hybrid format, the program focuses on analytical, theoretical and foundational groundings to address contemporary issues facing higher education educators, administrators and institutions. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, job growth in fields related to postsecondary higher education is projected at seven percent (faster than average) from 2018 to 2028. In 2019, the President approved a name change for the program and it is currently designated as Ed.D. in Higher Education in the university catalog.
- Major findings and recommendations: Following a declining trend in enrollments over the past four years (138 in 2013 to 95 in 2016), an uptick in enrollment (120 students) was observed in 2017. The number of degrees conferred by the program have held steady (15 in 2013 to 13 in 2017). The program has a 95 percent retention rate. Commitment to diversity in terms of the curricular offerings (e.g., offers a standalone course in diversity and social justice), faculty diversity (e.g., half of the faculty identify as faculty of color and there is diverse representation of gender), and student diversity is demonstrated by the program. Most recently in 2017, 44 percent of students identified as white non-Hispanic, 8 percent as Hispanic, and 32 percent as African-American non-Hispanic. Females represented 73 percent of the total enrollment, a trend similar to previous years. Alumni outcomes during the last four years indicate that full-time employment for program graduates was approximately 77

percent. Satisfaction with time to degree ranged from 60 to 83 percent and overall satisfaction with the degree program was on average 87 percent during the past four years. During the program's external review in 2017, the reviewers acknowledged the positive impact of curricular revisions and revised delivery format as meeting the needs of the target population. The reviewers also noted a concern in that faculty are assigned high dissertation loads.

- Actions taken since the last review: Several quality improvement activities have been undertaken since the last review in terms of major curricular revisions, implementation of a revised delivery format i.e., the weekend cohort model in contrast to the traditional format offered previously, and revised specializations such as the Community College Leadership track. These changes have enhanced alignment of the program's curriculum with both student interest (e.g., organizational leadership) as well as the current needs of the profession of higher education (e.g., strategic marketing, retention).
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program intends to continue its efforts toward implementation of cohort model programs, flexible programming that incorporates online delivery, development of curricula that address professional demands of students who are employed full-time, continued promotion of the high level of faculty and student diversity present in the program, and enhancement of faculty scholarship activities. The program also intends to work with the College of Education to prioritize faculty hires given the recent departure of two full-time faculty and a high number of potential dissertation students assigned to each current faculty member.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Doctor of Education in Adult and Higher Education, now cataloged as the Doctor of Education in Higher Education program is designed to meet the needs of working professionals eager to pursue their doctoral degree for career advancement and successfully graduates students who are employed in postsecondary teaching and leadership positions. Alumni of the program report high satisfaction with degree preparedness for advancement in careers. The program recently revised its curriculum to better align with student and market needs, and continues to demonstrate successful and ongoing assessment processes for assessing student learning.

**Program:** B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education (13.1202)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S.Ed.) in Elementary Education is designed to prepare future educators with the knowledge and

pedagogical approaches necessary to serve the needs of young learners. The program prepares students to sit for the Professional Educator License in Illinois for first- through sixth-grades. The program offers students the opportunity to complete one of four emphases: Bilingual/ESL, Elementary Mathematics Education, Reading Teacher, and Special Education. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, elementary education teachers work in public and private schools and job growth in this field is projected at three percent (slower than average) from 2018 to 2028.

- Major findings and recommendations: The program has managed to successfully maintain enrollments during the review period, despite overall enrollment declines within the university. While students enrolled in the program are primarily white and female, recent years have seen an increase in Hispanic and African-American students. Degrees conferred has remained relatively level (at approximately 90 per year), particularly during the past four years of the review period. Overall alumni satisfaction with the program is high, ranging from 89 percent to 97 percent. Assessment of student learning outcomes demonstrates consistent and comprehensive processes. The program is in good standing with disciplinary accreditation. The program is recommended to continue pursuing opportunities with area community colleges and school districts to develop additional partnerships and alliances to promote student enrollment in the program. Further, the program is recommended to host additional state and national level seminars to advertise the quality of the program to attract additional faculty and students. The program is also recommended to consider utilizing graduate assistants to aid in the ongoing development and implementation of assessment processes.
- Actions taken since the last review: A number of circumstances have arisen since the time of the last review of this program in 2012-2013. Among these are a high level of turnover in departmental leadership; changes in state administrative code; faculty attrition through retirement, movement or loss (i.e., six faculty members have left the department in the last two years); and the hiring of faculty with new skill sets. The program is seeing a shift in focus to one that is more responsive to the ever-changing demands and needs of elementary education teachers and schools. In the last few years, the College of Education has implemented a series of "Educate and Engage" programs at local, national, and international sites. Educate Local includes multiple regional opportunities for engaged learning opportunities; Educate U.S. provides students opportunities to experience diverse educational settings in another part of the country; and Educate Global does the same internationally.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program has expanded its work with two units within the College of Education, External and Global Programs and Student Services, in an effort to better connect with area community colleges and school districts to increase partnerships and alliances. The program is expanding state and national level seminars (e.g., increasing the number of times NIU's Social Justice Summer Camp for Educators is offered). In the upcoming year, the program will train graduate assistants in assessment processes to ease the data collection burden on faculty.

## Outcome

- Decision:

\_\_x\_\_ Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and Specialized Professional Association cycles).

Explanation: The Bachelors of Science in Education in Elementary Education has steady enrollments, steady degrees conferred, and high alumni satisfaction. Assessment processes are consistent and comprehensive, and the program has clearly developed mechanisms for ongoing continuous improvement.

**Program:** B.S.Ed. in Middle Level Teaching and Learning (13.1203)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S.Ed.) in Middle Level Teaching and Learning was created as a stand-alone degree program at NIU in 2016 following changes from the State of Illinois that required teachers to obtain this specific degree to teach grades five through eight. The degree program prepares students to teach two content areas (one major and one minor) to children in these grades. Major content areas available to students include English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science. In addition, students choose an additional minor content area including Art, English Language Arts, Family and Consumer Science, Foreign Language Spanish, Health Education, Learning Behavior Specialist – 1, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, and Social Science. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Outlook Handbook, middle school teachers work in public and private schools and job growth in this field is projected at three percent (slower than average) from 2018 to 2028.
- Major findings and recommendations: The program offers a wide variety of major and minor content areas, providing flexibility for students. The program has strong partnerships with local school districts and a strong commitment to engaged student learning (e.g., Educate Local, Educate U.S., and Educate Global). A comprehensive assessment plan for the assessment of student learning outcomes is in place and assessment data are being collected and analyzed. The program was recommended to continue data collection for assessment purposes and to seek additional resources for program advertising.
- Actions taken since the last review: This is the first review for the B.S.Ed. in Middle Level Teaching and Learning.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In the upcoming year, the program will train graduate assistants in assessment processes to ease the data collection burden on faculty. The program has also begun working with the College of Education’s Director of Communications to further develop and distribute recruitment materials for the program. These include, but are not limited to, email blasts to area schools, utilizing social media



platforms, and advertising at professional conferences.

## Outcome

- Decision:

x Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and Specialized Professional Association cycles).

Explanation: The Bachelors of Science in Education in Middle Level Teaching and Learning serves students looking to prepare for teaching in grades five through eight. The program offers flexibility for students, has strong partnerships with local school districts, and is committed to engaged student learning.

**Program:** M.S.Ed. in Literacy Education (13.1315)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Masters of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) in Literacy Education prepares experienced teachers to be socially responsible practitioner scholars and to work and learn within multicultural and multilingual contexts to foster literacy and language development for all learners across the lifespan. The program requires students to complete a minimum of 33 semester hours and includes a thesis or non-thesis option. The M.S.Ed. in Literacy Education program comprises two distinct foci that lead to different endorsements: (1) ESL/Bilingual with an ESL endorsement and (2) Reading Specialist with a Reading Specialist endorsement. Because the curriculum within these licensure foci is dictated by the state, there is little overlap of courses.
- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollments in the M.S.Ed. in Literacy Education program have climbed over the review period from 86 in Fall 2013 to 116 in Fall 2017. Likewise, degrees conferred in the program have grown from 44 in FY2013 to 63 in FY2017. Alumni report high levels of satisfaction with their degrees from a low of 85 percent to a high of 100 percent over the review period. Likewise, alumni report high levels of employment from 89 percent to 100 percent over the same period. The program seeks to increase diversity both in the student population and faculty ranks. The program is engaged in substantial community service and outreach. For example, the Jerry L. Johns Literacy Clinic represents a commitment by the program and department to community needs for literacy support for local K-12 youth. The clinic serves as the primary site for the federal program *America Reads* as well as other tutoring services in reading. The program's assessment of student learning outcomes have demonstrated well-established and comprehensive processes. The program is in good standing with disciplinary accreditation. The program is recommended to continue to work on diversity issues both with students and faculty and collect additional data on program evaluation for continuous quality improvement.

- Actions taken since the last review: A number of circumstances have arisen since the time of the last review of this program in 2012-2013 including a high level of turnover in departmental leadership and restructuring of units within the College of Education. Based upon increased interest and decreased enrollments in multiple geographical locations, the M.S.Ed. in Literacy Education program, with a focus in Reading, began offering an online option, which alternates with more traditional geographically based cohorts at NIU Hoffman Estates and NIU Naperville.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current program review, the program intends to continue to work on diversity issues both with students and faculty. The program will identify higher education institutions that serve a majority of students of color and work on developing agreements for recruitment of graduate students and faculty. Further, the program will develop videos and other materials that illustrate program benefits, and distribute those materials. The program will also continue to collect data for program evaluation and will set up an in-department shared data site for rapid access and analysis of program information, including competitor analysis.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and Specialized Professional Association cycles).

Explanation: Enrollments and degrees conferred in the Master of Science in Education in Literacy Education program have increased over the review period. Alumni outcomes are strong and the program is engaged in data-informed continuous quality improvement efforts.

## Program: B.S. in Kinesiology (31.0501)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Kinesiology program is designed to prepare students to work in careers across a variety of health, wellness, and sport performance settings. Program graduates are employed as corporate wellness managers, strength and conditioning coaches, fitness instructors, weight training instructors, and intramural sports directors. Some students also pursue graduate study in areas such as biomechanics and physical and occupational therapy. Students in the B.S. in Kinesiology program choose an area of focus in terms of wellness, performance, or sport management, prior to completing a culminating internship. The program has high demand, particularly with transfer students (e.g., the admit-to-enrolled yield for transfer students is 70 percent while the same yield for new freshman is 36 percent). The B.S. in Kinesiology program is recognized by the National Strength and Conditioning Association in the category of an Education Recognition Program and is a member of the American Kinesiology Association. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, job growth in

fields related to exercise physiology and fitness training is projected at 10-13 percent (much faster than average) from 2018 to 2028. The same source cites the median annual wage for these professions from \$39,820 to \$49,270 in 2018.

- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollments have been overall steady over the last five years with 248 undergraduate students in 2017, making it one of the largest majors within the institution. Peaks in enrollment were seen in 2015 (278 students) and 2016 (274 students). As a result, the program has seen a marked increase in the number of degrees conferred (116 in 2017), which is an 80 percent increase from 2013 (65 degrees conferred). The program is ethnically diverse in that approximately 52 percent of the current students are white non-Hispanic, 18 percent are Hispanic, and 23 percent identify as African-American non-Hispanic. However, females represent only 30 percent of enrollment, a widespread trend noted in the field of Kinesiology. Alumni outcomes during the last four years indicate that full-time employment for program graduates ranges between 50 and 64 percent, with a trend toward a higher proportion of graduates (54 percent in 2016) seeking additional degrees following attainment of the B.S. in Kinesiology degree. Alumni communicated satisfaction with time to degree (85 to 100 percent) and overall satisfaction with the B.S. in Kinesiology degree (above 85 percent during the past four years). The program is encouraged to continue pursuing 2+2 partnership opportunities with area community colleges and strengthen their outreach with area school districts as they develop additional partnerships and alliances to promote student enrollment, and focus on increasing gender equity within the program. The review team acknowledged the program's need to pursue remodeling laboratory facilities with institution appropriated funds. Assessment processes in the program are mature and provide program faculty with robust data on which to make informed program improvements.
- Actions taken since the last review: Several improvements have been undertaken by the program since its last review. These include revising the curriculum in 2016 to include three distinct tracks within Kinesiology, development of 2+2 community college partnerships, creation of 3+2 accelerated program, and piloting of engaged activities such as the inaugural faculty-led student trip to the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado. Furthermore, the program hired a permanent program director in Fall 2018 to replace the interim position in effect for the previous two years.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program intends to continue its efforts to work with the College of Education and central administration to renovate and modernize space for the motor behavior and exercise physiology laboratory facilities. This is a top priority for the program as it relates directly to training of students. Further, the program is continuing its efforts to complete the refinement of the three tracks in the B.S. in Kinesiology curriculum, and further expand student engagement and outreach activities such as faculty-led student activities and community partnerships.

## Outcome

- Decision:

\_\_x\_\_ Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology has steady enrollments, increased number of degrees conferred, high alumni satisfaction, and is in high demand as a major. The program's assessment processes are consistent and comprehensive, and the program has clearly developed mechanisms for ongoing continuous improvement.

## **Program:** M.S. in Sport Management (31.0504)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science (M.S.) in Sport Management program prepares graduates for a variety of sport management career opportunities including professional sports (e.g., MLB, NBA/WNBA, NFL, and NHL), college athletics (e.g., intercollegiate athletics), campus recreation, and parks departments. The program places a strong emphasis on experiential learning through internships and networking events with professionals in the field. For example, the mandatory internship is a full-time management experience in an off-campus sport management setting with minimum requirement of 150 hours. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, sports occupations are projected to grow five percent from 2018 to 2028, about as fast as the average for all occupations.
- Major findings and recommendations: While keeping enrollments steady (56 in 2013 to 59 in 2017) during the review period, the program successfully increased enrollment of female students (12 in 2013 to 18 in 2017). This is noteworthy given that sport management has traditionally been a male dominated field of study. The program continued efforts to recruit diversity in student and faculty population in terms of race and ethnic backgrounds. Currently, the percentage of African-American non-Hispanic students in the program has held relatively constant (18 percent in 2013 to 20 percent in 2017) and efforts towards hiring diverse faculty members is evidenced by the recent hires of a female tenure-track faculty member and a female instructor. The program averaged over 29 degrees conferred each year since 2013, with a high of 39 in 2016. Overall alumni satisfaction with degree preparedness for jobs is high (above 88 percent on average), as is satisfaction with time to degree (100 percent), and overall satisfaction with the program (average 87 percent). Assessment of student learning outcomes demonstrates consistent and comprehensive processes providing robust data on which to make informed program improvements. The program continues to build strong ties with major Chicago sports teams that provide internship opportunities for current students and employment possibilities for graduates. Faculty scholarship and external grant submissions is robust.

- Actions taken since the last review: Several initiatives have been undertaken since the last review including a revision to the program's curriculum in 2016 to include addition of a professional development course and greater flexibility with elective selections. The B.S. in Sport Management degree program was launched recently and minors in sport management and sales were introduced. Furthermore, the program established clear admission pathways for University Honors students to enroll in the graduate program and increased its focus on building networks and partnerships with area sports teams for student professional development since the last review.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program intends to review the impact of curricular revisions on student learning outcomes. Additionally, the program intends to focus its efforts on strengthening professional partnerships for internships, experiential learning opportunities, and outreach activities.

### Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Master of Science in Sport Management has steady enrollments and degrees conferred, high alumni satisfaction rates, and a growing demand for jobs in the industry. Assessment processes are consistent and comprehensive, and the program continues to build a stronger network of partnerships with sports companies to promote experiential learning and internships for its students.

**Program:** B.S. in Early Childhood Education (13.1210)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Early Childhood Education program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The program prepares students to become teachers in preschool through second-grade classrooms, childcare administrators, family services workers, parent educators, resource and referral specialists, family childcare providers, and early childhood intervention specialists. The program offers four of six courses for an additional English as Secondary Language (ESL) endorsement within the program curriculum to interested students, thus making it more accessible for students to work towards this endorsement. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, job growth for early childhood educators is projected at three percent (slower than average) from 2018 to 2028. The same source cites the annual mean wage for childhood educator jobs in Illinois as \$55,660.
- Major findings and recommendations: The enrollment growth in the B.S. in Early Childhood Education has shown a consistent trend since Fall 2013 (28 students) to Fall 2017 (55 students), which represents an overall 96 percent increase. Over the last four years, about 76

percent of students have identified as white non-Hispanic, while Hispanic and African-American non-Hispanic students have represented less than 11 percent and 6 percent respectively of the total enrollment trends. The program is comprised of almost all female students, a trend observed within the larger field of early childhood programs. Overall retention rates for students is over 95 percent. Alumni satisfaction with the program, degree preparedness for current job, and time to degree are consistently reported as high, ranging from 85 to 100 percent. The program demonstrates excellent use of assessment and retention data for decision-making and quality improvement, and has frequently been invited to NIU's annual assessment expo to showcase their assessment of student learning outcomes processes. The program is in good standing with National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). In 2016, the program revised its curriculum to align with revised NAEYC standards. As a part of this redesign, the program now offers a greater number of courses in ESL, enhanced clinical experiences for enrolled students, and has an intensified focus on promoting positive candidate dispositions toward teaching in high-need schools with diverse classrooms. For example, the program has continued to expand the Open Door project initiated in 2013, to promote training and knowledge of diverse students and diverse schools in order to prepare current students to feel confident in working in diverse environments. Student feedback collected by the program indicated that a high majority reported increased knowledge, skills, and confidence in working within diverse environments as a result of the project participation. Students also reported project participation led to a synthesis of knowledge gained from courses covered within the program.

- Actions taken since the last review: In 2016-2017 the program redesigned its curriculum and clinical experiences to meet the revised Illinois Teaching Standards and program-specific standards in their professional organization. Consequently, the revised program was approved by the Illinois State Board of Education in 2016-2017. Furthermore, the program aligned itself with the Gateway to Opportunity Early Childhood Education Credential Competencies (level 5) in 2017-2018. Most recently, the program successfully hired three tenure-track positions in Early Childhood.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program is working on several short- and long-term priorities including: (1) increasing course offerings in ESL to fully embed the ESL endorsement within the program to meet the growing demand for early childhood educator jobs requiring ESL endorsements, (2) enhancing collaborations with local community colleges in the Fox Valley region to support 2+2 transfer agreements to leverage high admit-to-enroll yields within this population, and (3) expanding online, hybrid, and summer course offerings to support student schedules. In terms of long-term priorities, the program intends to take steps in supporting faculty research scholarship by instituting a mentoring program within the department. Finally, the program is working on improving recruitment of individuals representing diversity in race, ethnicity, and gender.

## **Outcome**

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with Council for the

Accreditation of Educator Preparation and Specialized Professional Association cycles).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education has growing enrollments and high alumni satisfaction. Assessment processes and use of data to inform continuous program improvement is strong and the program is in good standing with its discipline-specific accreditor. The program serves as a model for best practices in assessment of student learning outcomes and use of continuous data to make quality improvements.

**Program:** B.S.Ed. in Special Education (13.1001)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science in Education (B.S.Ed.) in Special Education prepares graduates to work in schools and community settings with students from preschool through age 21 who have a variety of disabilities. Students are prepared to meet all Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) requirements for teacher licensure as they complete the degree program by choosing one of two distinct areas of emphasis: (1) the Learning-Behavior Specialist-1 (LBS-1) program, which prepares teacher education students to become licensed special educators in all disability areas (except the sensory areas of visual and hearing impairments) in grades kindergarten through grade 12; and (2) the Teacher of Visually Impaired (TVI) emphasis, which prepares teachers to teach students with blindness and vision issues in grades kindergarten through grade 12. Both licensure programs also adhere to the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards for initial teacher licensure. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the overall employment of special education teachers is projected to grow three percent from 2018 to 2028 (slower than average). Current median annual wage for special education teachers is reported by this same source at \$59,780.
- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollments in the B.S.Ed. in Special Education program have been declining over the review period from 328 in Fall 2013 to 217 in Fall 2017. The admitted-to-enrolled yield rates have consistently been higher for transfer students in comparison to new freshman. The number of degrees conferred have also declined from 74 in FY2013 to 46 in FY2017, a trend seen nationwide. In spite of these trends, alumni of the program report high levels (100 percent) of degree satisfaction and high employment rates (from 93 percent to 100 percent) over the review period. Key features of this program are a strong and comprehensive advising system, expanded opportunities for student-faculty research collaborations, and increased partnerships with local schools. The B.S.Ed. in Special Education program's curriculum relies heavily on diverse real-world learning opportunities with three early clinical experiences prior to student teaching. Students in the program also have opportunities to participate in the "*Educate and Engage Program*" that provides learning experiences in global, domestic, and local educational settings. Program assessment of student learning outcomes demonstrate well-established and comprehensive processes that inform curricular and programmatic decisions. It was recommended that the program continue to work with advisors on freshman admission rates, continue to develop the non-teaching licensure program to counter declining trends in teacher professions, and explore

expansion of online and hybrid courses, where feasible, to address student need.

- Actions taken since the last review: Several key changes occurred following the last program review. Faculty collaborated on a significant curricular revision process approximately six years ago wherein they engaged in extensive curricular mapping and realigned all courses and field experiences to meet the new Illinois Teaching Standards and revised standards in the program's professional organization. These revisions enhanced the program's core content and made course assignments more relevant to preparing students for the state-mandated edTPA assessment. Ultimately, these changes supported the program's recognition by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). As an additional advancement in teaching and learning pedagogy, the program formalized expectations for faculty to complete peer observations and provide constructive feedback to each other, and also included systematic mentoring of non-tenured faculty and instructors as a priority for the program. Finally, the program intensified their collaborative efforts in local schools to promote more reciprocity with local partners in instruction, field experience, and research.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current program review, the B.S.Ed. in Special Education program intends to focus on increasing enrollments by enhancing links with alumni, articulating success on outcomes (employment rates and satisfaction) and exploring the possibility of a 2+2 program with community college partnerships. The program also intends to promote two recently approved new non-teacher licensure programs (Special Populations and Blind Rehabilitation) and explore other additional non-teaching licensures to support enrollment trends.

## **Outcome**

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Science in Education in Special Education program offers a high quality teacher preparation experience in addition to providing various emphases in working with special needs population in the school and community settings. Alumni outcomes and satisfaction with the degree are strong as is the program's accredited status with its discipline-specific accreditor.

**Program:** M.S.Ed. in Early Childhood Education (13.1210)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) in Early Childhood Education program is accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The program prepares its graduates to work with children from birth



through age 8 in the capacity of preschool teachers, elementary school (K-2) teachers, child care administrators, family services workers, parent educators, and early childhood intervention specialists. The program provides enrolled students with the option of choosing one of two optional concentrations: one that meets requirements for a Professional Educator License to teach early childhood, and the other that meets special education approval requirements for teaching birth through age 6. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, job growth for early childhood educators with master's degrees is projected at three percent (slower than average) from 2018 to 2028. Enrolled students may choose a thesis or research focused option or a non-thesis option, each requiring successful completion of a comprehensive exam.

- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollment in the M.S.Ed. in Early Childhood Education program has remained relatively steady since 2013 (27 students) to 2017 (24 students), with a low enrollment of 15 students in 2015. Retention in the program increased in successive years likely due to addition of more hybrid and online courses. About 90 percent of enrolled students are female, with over 75 percent on average identifying as white non-Hispanic. Degrees conferred have also remained steady with six degrees conferred in 2013 and nine in 2017. Overall satisfaction with the degree as reported by alumni has been close to 100 percent, with similarly high levels of satisfaction (above 85 percent on average) with degree preparedness for jobs reported during the review period. In the recent years, all students have passed the state content test (edTPA) with average scores higher than the state average. For example, most recently in 2018, all students passed the edTPA with an average score of 40, which exceeded the state passing score of 37. The program demonstrates excellent use of assessment and retention data for decision-making purposes.
- Actions taken since the last review: In 2016-2017 the program redesigned its curriculum and clinical experiences to meet the revised Illinois Teaching Standards and program-specific standards in their professional organization. As a part of this redesign, students were strongly encouraged to complete coursework for the English and Secondary Language endorsement and the Early Childhood Special Education approval. The program aligned itself with the Gateway to Opportunity Early Childhood Education Credential Competencies (level 5) in 2017-2018.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program is working on increasing enrollments by expanding online and hybrid course offerings to meet the needs of students with diverse needs. The program further intends to enhance marketing strategies to promote it in state professional conferences and via program website. Additionally, the program intends to enhance faculty and student research collaborations.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and Specialized Professional Association cycles).

Explanation: The Master of Science in Education in Early Childhood Education program has steady enrollments and overall high alumni satisfaction with the degree. Graduates demonstrate above average pass rates on the state content test (edTPA). Assessment processes and use of data to inform continuous program improvement is excellent and the program has addressed conditions highlighted for improvement by its discipline-specific accreditor.

**Program:** M.S.Ed. in Special Education (13.1001)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Masters of Science in Education (M.S.Ed.) in Special Education program prepares its graduates to teach children, adolescents, and young adults with special needs through specialization in one of two options: (1) Advanced Special Education Practices and (2) Learning Behavior Specialist I (an accredited program). In addition, students may pursue graduate certificates in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Directors of Special Education, both of which are offered by the department. Many students complete an additional certification e.g., Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) as part of the degree program. The program provides graduate education endorsements to teacher cohorts in off-campus locations such as Rockford and Elgin within the state of Illinois. Median starting salaries for program graduates are in the range \$46,000 to \$65,000.
- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollments in the M.S.Ed. in Special Education program have steadily increased over the review period from 78 in Fall 2013 to 132 in Fall 2017. Degrees awarded in the program have also followed the upward trend ranging from 45 in FY2013 to 49 in FY2017. Although the program has higher female enrollment, a trend seen nationally in comparable degree programs, the number of male students has been slowly increasing within the program. Alumni of the program report high levels (90 to 100 percent) of degree satisfaction, high levels of employment (upwards of 90 percent), and satisfaction (average 80 percent over the last three years) with level of preparedness for their current job, following graduation. Program strengths were noted in areas of faculty teaching and service, with high levels of external federal grants secured by faculty in Vision Impairments. Program strengths were also noted in efforts to offer students strong and comprehensive advising, availability of experiential learning opportunities through research and teaching, and expanded opportunities for research collaborations with highly recognized faculty. The program was encouraged to explore ways that individuals from non-teaching backgrounds can obtain a Master's degree or endorsement in special education with greater efficiency. Another recommendation was to identify if additional courses or course sections can be offered online or in hybrid formats based on student needs.
- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last review, the M.S.Ed. in Special Education program has started to offer an award-winning Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) program, ranked #34 in the nation, and is currently only one of two such programs within the state of Illinois. Other key initiatives have included a comprehensive revision of the Advanced Special Education Practices specialization in Fall 2017, offering of online credit and non-credit bearing workshops to vision professionals around the nation, and expansion of

the graduate program delivery to teacher cohorts in Rockford and Elgin areas.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current review, the program intends to continue to explore ways that individuals from non-teaching backgrounds can obtain a Master's degree or endorsement in special education with greater efficiency. Further, the program will identify if additional courses or course sections can be offered online or in hybrid formats based on student needs. Finally, the program intends to continue to leverage its alumni to increase donor giving for graduate scholarships and for mentorship opportunities to be availed by current students. These measures have been successful over the last few years and continue to be a priority for the program.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation).

Explanation: Enrollments and degrees conferred in the Master of Science in Education in Special Education program have been on the rise over the review period. Alumni outcomes are strong and the program has demand for its graduate certificate programs (e.g., the nationally reputed BCBA certification), some of which are completed by current students during the course of their enrollment within the M.S.Ed. in Special Education program.

**Program:** B.S. in Communicative Disorders (51.0201)

## Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Communicative Disorders program is designed to prepare students in combining interests in communicative disorders with preparation for advanced study in fields such as speech-language pathology, audiology, medical sciences, dentistry, physical or occupational therapy, community health, linguistics, or rehabilitation counseling. Graduates enter careers with job titles such as residential counselor, hospital patient relations specialist, healthcare interpreter, clinical intake specialist, and applied behavior analysis line therapist. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, job growth is projected at seven percent (faster than average) over the next decade for graduates with a B.S. in Communicative Disorders.
- Major findings and recommendations: The B.S. in Communicative Disorders program demonstrates excellence in teaching and advising, strong articulation with community colleges, and high retention rates for enrolled students. While the credit hour production has declined in the lower division (100-200 level) courses (4,947 in Fall 2013 to 1,926 in Fall 2017), the credit hour generation in the upper division (300-400 level) courses has been stable over the past three years (7,747 in Fall 2017). A higher proportion of transfer students tend to matriculate into the undergraduate degree program (65 percent in 2013 to 72 percent

in 2017) compared to freshman matriculation trends (32 percent in 2013 to 29 percent in 2017). Overall enrollment has declined from 198 students in 2013 to 146 students in 2017, with 49 degrees conferred in 2017 compared with 68 in 2013. The vast majority of alumni (over 70 percent) report pursuing additional degrees following the B.S. in Communicative Disorders. The current program review identified a need to enhance faculty research and publications to balance the strong service commitment demonstrated by program faculty.

- Actions taken since the last review: Following the last review, the B.S. in Communicative Disorders program revised its student learning outcomes and implemented a new assessment plan in 2015. Curricular improvements have been undertaken by adding two writing-infused courses and an internship course to promote degree-related engaged experiences. Further, to increase competitiveness in the job market, the program major also initiated a requirement for students to earn a minor prior to graduation.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program intends to continue its efforts toward increasing enrollment and degrees conferred by attracting talented students through articulation with area community colleges and strengthening advising, peer tutoring, and mentoring activities. For instance, the program recently developed the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) to the B.S. in Communication Disorders articulation plan with College of DuPage. Further, the program intends to support faculty efforts to enhance their productivity especially in the areas of awards and grants.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Science in Communicative Disorders has recently initiated several strategies to increase enrollments by engaging in articulation agreements with area community colleges and strengthening advising, peer tutoring, and mentoring activities to support enrollment. Projected job growth for graduates is encouraging and the degree serves as a conduit for graduate programs. Over 70 percent of alumni reported pursuing additional certification and/or graduate education for professional careers in health related fields.

**Program:** M.A. in Communicative Disorders (51.0201)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Communicative Disorders program offers specializations in: (1) Speech-Language Pathology (SLP), and (2) Audiology, and may be completed with a thesis or non-thesis option. The SLP specialization is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) in Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Students in

this specialization are trained to assess, diagnose, treat, and help to prevent communication and swallowing disorders in children and adults. Most states, including Illinois, require SLPs to be licensed prior to practicing in schools and healthcare facilities. Graduates also seek employment in research settings to assist in the development of augmentative and alternate communication. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, job outlook is projected at 27 percent (much faster than average) over the next decade for SLP practitioners. According to the same source, median annual pay for SLP was \$77,510 in 2018. The specialization in the Audiology track is completed by students who continue into the Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) program.

- Major findings and recommendations: The M.A. in Communicative Disorders demonstrates high degree completion rates (three-year average at 95 percent) as well as 100 percent placement rates for employment. Enrollment has been stable and trending upwards (41 in 2013 to 47 in 2017) with the instructional cost per credit hour at \$230 in 2016, much lower than the mean \$394 for Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) peer group. The program was recently (2018) fully reaccredited by CAA as it met all accreditation standards. Three-year averages for SLP Praxis licensure pass rates are consistently upwards of 95 percent, making this a degree with excellent graduate outcomes. Diversity in the student body is low, with over 90 percent female and a majority of students identifying as white non-Hispanic.
- Actions taken since the last review: In response to updated educational standards by CAA, the program revised its student learning outcomes and assessment plan in 2015. At that time, the program faculty also conducted a syllabus review to align curriculum with CAA recommended knowledge, skills, and competencies being taught, demonstrated, and evaluated in the program. Since the previous review, the program has continued to leverage area and state professional networks for enhancing clinical opportunities for enrolled students and instituted a mentoring program that pairs graduate students with undergraduates, thereby enhancing engagement for both groups of students.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program intends to continue its efforts toward increasing the number and diversity of clinical opportunities for licensure and certification, and as such attracting talented students to the master's program. Further, program faculty are focusing their efforts toward greater scholarship and achievement of awards and grants. Finally, enrollment of a more diverse student body is also a key priority for the program.

## Outcome

- Decision:

Program in good standing (review in eight years to align with CAA).

Explanation: The Master of Arts in Communicative Disorders has stable enrollment trends, and excellent degree completion and job placement rates. Time to first job is typically less than six months and licensure pass rates are consistently high for the Speech-Language

Pathology specialization. Alumni of the program report very high satisfaction on degree preparedness and the program fulfills a growing need for health-care professions that are growing faster than average.

**Program:** Doctor of Audiology (51.0202)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- **Major changes in the program:** The Doctor of Audiology (Au.D.) program provides students with knowledge, skills, and competencies within the field of audiology and trains them to conduct basic and applied research as they prepare for professional practice in the area of audiology. Program graduates are employed in healthcare facilities such as audiology clinics and hospitals, and educational settings such as school districts. The program meets the academic and clinical requirements for the *Certificate of Clinical Competence in Audiology* awarded by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and Illinois state licensure requirements. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of audiologists shows a projected growth of 16 percent from 2018 to 2028, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. According to the same source, the median annual pay for audiologists in 2018 was \$75,920.
- **Major findings and recommendations:** The Au.D. degree is a four-year, full-time, nationally accredited program (by the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) in Audiology) that includes a 12-month external placement in the fourth year. The program's curricular sequence is aligned with CAA standards and students are supported with strong advising services in the curriculum and clinical practice experiences. According to the most recent *US News and World Report*, this program's national ranking has climbed from #60 to #45. Student outcome data indicate that program graduates demonstrate high completion rates (three-year average at 84 percent) and have competitive job offers prior to graduation. During the review period 100 percent of graduates responding to alumni surveys reported being employed within six months of seeking employment. Enrollments in the audiology program have been stable during the review period (32 in 2013 to 33 in 2017), with an average number of eight degrees conferred each year over the 2014 to 2017 span. Twenty-four percent of the current study body is from underrepresented populations. The program was recently reaccredited in 2018 and is in full compliance with educational standards set by the CAA. Three-year averages for Audiology Praxis licensure pass rates are 100 percent, making this a degree with excellent graduate outcomes.
- **Actions taken since the last review:** Since the last review in 2014, the Au.D. program has revised its student learning outcomes and assessment practices to align with revised CAA standards and has actively increased external rotation opportunities for current students. With stronger advising and enhanced admission requirements, the program has attracted externships that are more competitive, has increased student research and conference presentations, and enhanced its national rankings making it a more competitive program within the state.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the Au.D. program intends to continue its focus on recruitment and retention, and program quality. Specifically, the program intends to: (1) launch a centralized application system which increases program visibility in national searches and reduces application times; (2) continue assigning a dedicated academic advisor to each cohort in addition to clinical advisors available during each clinical experience; (3) provide remediation opportunities, when needed, for students to meet the knowledge and skills acquisition standards set by the CAA accreditation; and (4) enhance networks with local, regional, and national audiology programs and practitioners to increase number of external rotation opportunities for each student in the program.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years to align with CAA accreditation for the Doctor of Audiology program).

Explanation: The Doctor of Audiology program is a nationally accredited professional program that demonstrates stable enrollment trends, excellent completion and job placement, and a 100 percent licensure pass rate by program graduates. The national rankings for the program are growing, making it a competitive program offered by an Illinois public school to meet market demands of a profession that is expected to grow at a faster than average rate.

**Program:** B.S. in Public Health (51.2201)

## Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelors of Science (B.S.) in Public Health program offers four emphases to prepare its graduates for careers in health administration, environment and health, health promotion, and general public health. Within these contexts, graduates have held positions as environmental health inspectors, health administrators, community health workers, epidemiologists, and patient service representatives. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, job growth is projected at 11 percent (faster than average) over the next decade for graduates with a B.S. in Public Health degree. The median annual wage for community health workers was \$39,540 and health educators was \$54,220.
- Major findings and recommendations: The B.S. in Public Health program is the largest undergraduate degree program in the College of Health and Human Sciences at NIU, with 248 enrolled majors in Fall 2017. It is also the most ethnically diverse program with 32 percent white non-Hispanic, 32 percent African-American non-Hispanic, 24 percent Hispanics, 5.5 percent Asians, and 6.5 percent mixed race students. Enrollment in the B.S. program has remained high (238 in Fall 2013 to 248 in Fall 2017), with a greater proportion of female students (184 females to 64 males in 2017), and a higher percent of transfer students. Pre-nursing and other pre-professional students tend to enroll in the lower division

public health courses. Degrees awarded in the program have followed an upward trend ranging from 92 in FY2013 to 100 in FY2017. Program strengths are noted in focused student engagement practices including undergraduate academic advising and career mentoring in addition to the mandatory 360 clock hours of internship experiences required for degree completion. The B.S. in Public Health program is open enrollment and contributes heavily to the university's general education program. The program has excellent online course offerings that are attracting greater enrollments.

- Actions taken since the last review: In 2018, the program initiated an accelerated bachelor to master's in Public Health (B.S./M.P.H.) degree for high achieving undergraduate students to be completed in five years. Such an option has potential for positive impacts for recruitment and retention of undergraduate and graduate students. Further, the program has focused on quality improvement practices including strengthening assessment practices, involving community agencies and an advisory board for program improvement, and hiring an internship coordinator to facilitate undergraduate internships and other engaged experiences.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current review, the program intends to pursue short and long term priorities geared toward: (1) enhancing student enrollment, especially steadily increasing the number of male students in the program, (2) supporting faculty scholarship, and (3) expanding online course offerings based on current student need. The program further intends to bolster advising support for students considering this degree choice.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: Enrollments and degrees conferred in the Bachelor of Science in Public Health program have demonstrated a steady to upward growth during the review period. The program is noteworthy for its diverse racial and ethnic representation and contributes strongly to the university's general education program. Demand for careers in public health is high and expected to grow over the next decade.

## Program: Master of Public Health (51.2201)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: During the previous program review in 2009-2010, the Master of Public Health (M.P.H.) program was housed in the School of Nursing and Health Studies (NUHS), together with the nursing programs. In 2016, the College of Health and Human Sciences (CHHS) underwent a reorganization, which separated public health from Nursing and resulted in a School of Health Studies (SHS), comprised of Public Health, Nutrition and Dietetics, and Medical Laboratory Sciences disciplines. These actions have



allowed for greater interdisciplinary collaborations between all these health-related fields. The M.P.H. program has been nationally accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) since 1997, and was most recently reaccredited until July 2023. This degree program prepares graduates for professional leadership positions in public health and other health-related agencies based on their acquired skillset in multidisciplinary and collaborative research, identification of large-scale health issues, and in meeting the health needs of diverse populations. The program offers two specializations: Health Promotion and Health Services Management. Graduates typically pursue careers as public health managers, research scientists, epidemiologists, biostatisticians, health communication specialists, and in other management positions in nutrition, international health, and health practice. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the current median pay for such professions is \$69,000. In Fall 2012, an online M.P.H. program was initiated, in addition to the face-to-face version.

- Major findings and recommendations: The M.P.H. program is one of eight such programs in the State of Illinois and one of four that offer online program options. It is the only program offering an online M.P.H. degree with a specialization in Health Promotion. Enrollment in the M.P.H. program has remained relatively consistent over the past five years, ranging between 48 and 52 between (between Fall 2013 and Fall 2017). Although student diversity of the M.P.H. program is increasing, currently it remains less diverse than the undergraduate program. For example, among the 2018 matriculated students, 52 percent are white non-Hispanic, 14 percent are international and 34 percent identified as minority. There is also a gender imbalance, reflecting the field as a whole, which is skewed towards more female students. Degrees awarded in the program have stayed consistent ranging from 15 in FY2013 to 18 in FY2017. The program's disciplinary accreditor, CEPH, requires that 80 percent of program graduates are either employed, continuing their education, or not seeking employment 12 months after graduation. Graduates of the program have surpassed this bar every year within the last five years. Most recently, in 2015-2016, 76 percent of students were employed within six months, and another additional 14 percent were enrolled in additional education including medical school.
- Actions taken since the last review: The M.P.H. program has undergone several quality improvements since the last review. A completely online M.P.H. program was launched starting with the Health Services Management specialization in 2012, and then expanding to the Health Promotion Specialization in 2014. Another development was the elimination of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) requirement for admission into the M.P.H. program and the initiation of the B.S. in Public Health to M.P.H. accelerated degree program in 2018. Further, in response to the most recent accreditation review, the program implemented steps to improve their comprehensive exam pass rates, enhanced in-service activities for online students outside of their internship experiences, and developed strategies to increase faculty diversity in the program. During AY2017-2018, the program's faculty and staff collaboratively revised the M.P.H.'s student learning outcomes and assessment plan to align better with the foundational competencies required for accreditation.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current program review, the M.P.H. program intends to continue efforts to grow enrollment by promoting the online program while pursuing Quality Matters (QM) standards for online course revisions and

delivery, instituting priority consideration for fall applicants to the graduate program, and promoting the accelerated 5-year bachelors to graduate degree for retention of highly talented students. The program further intends to explore joint graduate degree programs with other health-related fields such as Nutrition and Dietetics to meet growing industry demands.

## Outcome

- Decision:  
  x   Program in good standing (review in six years to align with CEPH accreditation).

Explanation: The M.P.H. program is nationally accredited and is one of eight graduate programs in public health offered within the State of Illinois. It is also one of four online programs offered within the state and has a niche as the only one that offers an online specialization in Health Promotion. Alumni outcomes in terms of job placement and time to job are strong for this degree program.

## Program: B.S. in Health Sciences (51.1504)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Health Sciences program prepares students with a health science-based curriculum with a focus on healthcare leadership skills, financial principles, management strategies, and standards to improve patient care. Program graduates are employed in fields of medical laboratory sciences, nursing, physical therapy, and other health professions as entry-level workers. Median salary for such professions ranges from \$40,000 - \$45,000 per the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook. NIU's B.S. in Health Sciences program was revised in 2017 to support the large number of pre-majors (non-degree seeking) students by offering three emphases: (1) Pre-Physical Therapy, intended for students wanting to pursue a graduate degree in Physical therapy, (2) General Emphasis, intended for students wanting to pursue nursing or medical laboratory sciences degrees, and (3) Degree Completion, which is an online/off-campus degree completion program for health and human science professionals.
- Major findings and recommendations: The B.S. in Health Sciences program underwent significant revision in 2017 to include consolidation of the health sciences-focused programs, establishment of degree paths for intended nursing and medical laboratory sciences students, revision of student learning outcomes, and updates to the program's curricular priorities to include interprofessional education and diversity and retention initiatives. The program is continuing to monitor trends in enrollment, retention, and degree completion in the three emphases areas. Data are also being collected for post-baccalaureate outcomes following the 2017 revisions. Alumni outcomes between 2012 and 2016 (prior to the restructuring efforts) indicated about 45 percent of alumni reported being full-time employed, with 60-70 percent pursuing additional degrees. Overall satisfaction with the program ranged on average at 75 percent.

- Actions taken since the last review: The B.S. in Health Sciences program underwent significant revisions in academic year 2017-2018. Since then the program has continued to target student outcomes including improving student retention rates, progress to degree, and preparation for job-entry with a B.S. degree or preparation for additional education by program graduates.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current review, the program intends to continue focusing its efforts on retention of enrolled students and degree completion outcomes for all students (including non-degree seeking) enrolled in the program. Similarly, the program intends to focus efforts on enrollment and advising. Finally, the current program review highlighted a need for the program to track courses and emphases followed by enrolled students, so that specific courses within these emphases may be offered in a hybrid or online format based on student needs and interests.

### **Outcome**

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The B.S. in Health Sciences program was recently restructured to provide degree paths for intended health-related professions such as nursing, physical therapy, and medical laboratory sciences. Program graduates are typically employed in entry-level positions, and more than 60 percent of the graduates pursue additional education, mostly in health-related fields. The program is monitoring outcomes following the revised curriculum and learning outcomes.

**Program:** Juris Doctor (J.D.) (22.0101)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Juris Doctor (J.D.) program prepares graduates to successfully acquire legal jobs as “practice-ready lawyers” with its focus on infusing the legal curriculum with enhanced opportunities to improve writing and communication skills, and mandating student participation in multiple experiential learning projects. Graduates of the program practice law in several fields such as civil law, constitutional law, business and commercial law, environmental law, immigration, and labor and employment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the outlook for employment of lawyers is projected to grow six percent (as fast as average) from 2018 to 2028. The J.D. program was most recently reaccredited by the American Bar Association (ABA) in 2017. The College of Law also renewed its membership with the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) in 2017.
- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollments in the J.D. program have steadily increased from 253 students in Fall 2015 to 269 students in Fall 2017. During this time, enrollments for males increased (132 in 2015 to 147 in 2017) faster than females. Current

ultimate two-year bar passage rate for graduates of the program is 86 percent with stable employment outcomes for the past four years. For example, 88 percent of alumni reported full-time employment while a small percentage (three percent) reported pursuing additional education. Degree satisfaction rates reported by alumni are on average 95 percent or higher and median reported salary was \$52,000. As the only public program in northern Illinois, the College of Law entered the *US News Rankings* list of ranked law schools in 2016. The program's high demand is evident in the 24 percent increase in applications in 2017 compared to the eight percent increase at national ABA accredited law schools.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last program review, the program has increased its certificate offerings and now offers a total of six certificates (i.e., business law, civil advocacy, public interest law, criminal practice, international law, and law and women's and gender studies). The College of Law has also increased its focus on accelerated 3+3 degree partnerships that lead to both an undergraduate degree (B.A. or B.S., depending on the program) and a J.D. at the end of six years. Disciplines involved in these partnerships include art history, business administration, management, sociology, history, engineering, engineering technology, political science, philosophy, management, world languages, and university honors program.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: The College of Law intends to continue efforts to expand the dual-degree opportunities with other departments and is working to open the "accelerated law degree" option to the entire undergraduate population at NIU. Additionally, efforts will also be geared towards supporting enrollment by recruiting potential students nationwide and offering some asynchronous online courses that meet Quality Matters (QM) standards. The current review further highlighted the need for increasing fundraising in conjunction with the recent hire of a Development Officer in the College for this purpose.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with ABA accreditation).

Explanation: The Juris Doctor program has stable to growing enrollments, average to high level of attainment of student outcomes as demonstrated by the bar exam pass rates and is experiencing steady student demand.

## Program: M.S.T. (13.1399)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science in Teaching (M.S.T.) is designed for licensed teachers seeking endorsements at the master's level in disciplines approved by the university. All students pursuing the degree are required to complete core experiences in which they demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to assessment, diversity

and special needs, human development and learning, and pedagogy in their content area. For this review period, there was only one specialization active for this degree, the Specialization in Mathematics Education.

- Major findings and recommendations: Enrollments have been relatively low over the review period but alumni outcomes for the program are strong including 88 to 100 percent reported satisfaction with the degree. The program is recommended to gather more information from alumni on the benefits of the program and enlist them in recruiting efforts. The reporting of assessment of student learning has been incomplete during the review period. The program will be required to submit an updated Assessment Plan and Status Report to the University Assessment Panel in Fall 2021. Further, the program is recommended to modify and/or expand the M.S.T. degree to meet the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) requirement to better serve the changing needs for teachers.
- Actions taken since the last review: This was the first review of this Master of Science in Teaching program for the Specialization in Mathematics Education.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current review for the M.S.T. with a Specialization in Mathematics Education, the program will take the following actions: contact alumni to get further information on the benefits of the program and assist in recruitment efforts; modify the program as needed in order to address recent licensure changes from ISBE, with the goal of increasing program enrollment; work with relevant college and university personnel to develop a marketing strategy for increasing enrollment and promoting the program in regional school districts; and solicit outside grant funding through various state and national agencies to support program development and recruitment, including tuition support (especially for teachers in under-represented groups).

## Outcome

- Decision:

x Program in good standing (review in seven years to align with Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation cycle and submit updated Assessment Plan and Status Report to the University Assessment Panel in Fall 2021).

Explanation: Alumni outcomes are strong and the program is working to increase enrollments. The reporting of assessment of student learning outcomes requires improvement.

## Program: B.S. in Chemistry (40.0501)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Chemistry program offers a choice of four emphases or degree paths including: (1) chemistry, (2) biochemistry, (3) educator licensure for secondary teaching, and (4) chemistry for pre-professional degrees.

The chemistry and biochemistry emphases are certified by the American Chemistry Society (ACS). The B.S. in Chemistry program prepares students for many career options including teaching in junior and high schools, continuing in advanced degrees and research, and working as chemists and material scientists. The ACS certification for this degree program significantly aids in graduates' employability and demonstrates the program has continued to have the complete breadth and adequate depth needed for student preparation. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the outlook for employment of undergraduates with chemistry degrees is projected to grow four percent (as fast as average) from 2018 to 2028.

- Major findings and recommendations: The B.S. in Chemistry program allows a choice of clear curricular options and training with high-quality instrumentation in preparation for advanced degrees or teaching and practitioner careers. In spite of decline in university enrollment, offerings in upper division (300-400 level) credit hours have been stable as have the number of majors. A 2018 external review of the undergraduate program concluded this program compares favorably with national peers. External reviewers applauded the program for its rigor in involving students in research and instrumentation as they prepare for advanced degrees or careers in industry. Requirements for majors to conduct at least two credit hours of research is a strength. The program has a robust record of enrollment, a good program for advising, and an expanding level of student financial support through recent NSF Scholarships for STEM students (S-STEM) and Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) grants. Alumni survey trends indicate relatively quick time to employment following graduation and high overall satisfaction with the B.S. in Chemistry degree.
- Actions taken since the last review: Since 2016, the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry has received a \$275,000 grant from the NSF to host a three-year REU program and twice spearheaded a \$1,000,000 grant application to the NSF S-STEM program to provide scholarships to STEM students in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Since the last program review, the program has invested in modernizing instruments in introductory labs to serve the majority of undergraduate students. Student financial support has been expanded through the S-STEM program wherein academically talented, financially disadvantaged rising juniors at NIU and new community college transfers are financially supported. These measures have reduced equity gaps, enhanced retention, and are projected to expand diversity in the U.S. STEM workforce within the state.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current program review, the program intends to revise and modernize its curriculum by addressing changes in the ACS accreditation requirements to teach more interdisciplinary subjects. The B.S. in Chemistry program also intends to continue its efforts to update manuals for first-year chemistry laboratories and improve efficiency and safety in organic chemistry laboratories. Further, the program will continue to narrow the equity gaps in freshman classes by incorporating a recitation section to supplant instruction in freshman courses with large class sizes.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Science in Chemistry provides a variety of emphases considered to be in high demand including two ACS certified tracks in Chemistry and Biochemistry areas. Requirements for majors to conduct at least two credit hours of research is a strength. The program has a robust record of enrollment, a good program for advising, and an expanding level of student financial support through recent NSF Scholarships. The program compares favorably with those nationally and offers good employment prospects as well as training for advanced degrees.

**Program:** M.S. in Chemistry (40.0501)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Science (M.S.) in Chemistry program prepares graduates in developing skills necessary for research, education and professional practice in the industry. In order to meet diverse career demands, the program has six tracks for students to choose from including: (1) analytical, (2) biological, (3) inorganic, (4) organic, (5) physical, and (6) interdisciplinary nanotechnology.
- Major findings and recommendations: A significant co-curricular component of graduate training in chemistry at NIU is the availability of advanced equipment and instrumentation, and access to the excellent research facilities such as the Argonne National Laboratory. In 2018 faculty instituted a novel “Industrial Master’s” program targeting practicing chemists for graduate work via online courses, research projects at students’ job sites (supervised by an NIU faculty member in consultation with their supervisor), and a master’s theses based on research relevant to students’ current jobs. The program has recently approved a new set of curricular requirements for M.S. in Chemistry students that reduces course requirements and streamlines the curriculum, enabling students to enter research labs earlier in the sequence. Increased engagement with industry partners is on the rise. For example, recently Shimadzu Scientific Instruments initiated a research fellowship program for sponsoring one M.S. in Chemistry student each year. Graduates of the M.S. in Chemistry program are employed in chemical and pharmaceutical companies as well as government laboratories, especially within the Midwest. While internships are rare in the chemistry community, the department has taken advantage of the connection with Argonne National Laboratory, where both students and faculty can broaden their experiences. Although the program’s cohort is relatively small, enrollments encompass a mix of ethnic, first generation, international, and female students. On average, the program graduates 3-4 M.S. in Chemistry students with the typical time to degree being 2-2.5 years.

- Actions taken since the last review: In 2016, the program hired three new faculty members with common interests in Nano science and strong ties to Argonne National Laboratory which has helped develop research groups for graduate students. In collaboration with Shimadzu Scientific Instruments, the department is in the process of opening an analytical chemistry lab and utilizing the instrumentation for research and teaching.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: In response to the current program review, the department intends to expand graduate course offerings and focus on efforts to diversify its faculty. For example, plans are underway to offer a new online graduate corporate program (the “Industrial Master’s”) for meeting industry demands for graduate work in chemistry. Further, the program intends to upgrade its current scientific instrumentation and develop partnerships with instrument manufacturers to expand the Shimadzu Fellows program. Finally, the program intends to collaborate with Division of Enrollment Management, Marketing and Communications to craft and implement an advertising strategy for the M.S. in Chemistry program.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Masters of Science in Chemistry program compares favorably to peer R2 schools in providing a solid foundation and training in skills necessary for research, development and education. The program graduates students in a timely manner and graduates have reported satisfaction with job placements and time to degree completion. In response to market demands, efforts are underway to implement the new online graduate corporate program, the “Industrial Master’s,” for meeting industry demands for graduate work in Chemistry.

## Program: Ph.D. in Chemistry (40.0501)

### Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Chemistry focuses on preparing students in both interdisciplinary and traditional chemistry disciplines by learning new technologies, innovating and performing the very latest, cutting-edge research. Graduates can specialize in any one of six areas of emphasis in chemistry including (1) analytical, (2) biological, (3) inorganic, (4) organic, (5) physical, and (6) interdisciplinary nanotechnology. The program prepares students to teach in postsecondary institutions, and conduct research and innovate in private and government funded research laboratories and corporations.
- Major findings and recommendations: The Ph.D. in Chemistry program has strong regional ties and access to excellent research facilities such as Argonne National Laboratory.



Although enrollment in the program has declined slightly since 2014 (40 doctoral candidates) to Fall 2017 (30 doctoral candidates), the number of degrees conferred (seven average per year) has remained stable. Enrolled students represent a mix of ethnic, first generation, and female students, with 52 percent identifying as white non-Hispanic, and 47 percent female. Doctoral students serve as Teaching Assistants in introductory laboratory courses, upper and lower division courses for organic and biochemistry majors, and other science, engineering, and health profession courses, thus assuring teaching experience and funding through at least two years. The current review indicates that graduate recruitment could be enhanced by increased research funding to support students throughout the entirety of their doctoral studies. The average time for completion of the Ph.D. program is 5.3 years, which is comparable to national norms. In the last five years, the program completed its first major National Science Foundation-Major Research Initiative grant (\$360,000) which has supported research initiatives. Grant awards have steadily increased from 2015 (\$115,000) to 2019 (\$1,293,000), as has scholarly research productivity.

- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last review, the program has hired 3.5 faculty members including one joint appointment with Argonne National Laboratory, which has supported the growth of research groups especially in Nano science and increased overall publication rates in the program. Additionally, the program has focused efforts on recruiting potential graduate students by leveraging existing offerings by the department e.g., research interested students enrolled in the National Science Foundation Research Experience for Undergraduates (NSF-REU) program hosted since 2016 are approached for considering NIU's doctoral program in Chemistry. Finally, major curricular revisions were proposed to the doctoral program in 2017, and a major research instrumentation grant (\$253,000) was secured from the NSF.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: Based on the current program review, enhancing funding for doctoral students is a key priority for the program. Consequently, the program intends to escalate efforts to increase grant funding to support current doctoral students on research grants beyond the first two years, and guarantee funding for new students for least five years. Further, the program intends to continue its momentum in recruiting talented faculty members, acquiring instrumentation, and securing external grant funding. These initiatives will be in tandem with priorities to replace retiring faculty members and recruit more doctoral students by improving funding support. Other initiatives planned to increase recruitment of highly talented and diverse faculty and students include exploring certification in the American Association for Advancement of Science's STEM Equity Achievement (SEA) program, pursuing NSF's Traineeship program, and enhancing research assistantship opportunities for doctoral students to develop robust research streams and enhance research productivity.

## Outcome

- Decision:

\_\_x\_\_ Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry is a robust program contributing to the research mission of the university and demonstrates good student outcomes in terms of training, research and teaching pedagogy, and employment. Completion and graduation rates exceed national averages.

**Program:** B.A./B.S. in Philosophy (38.0101)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Philosophy program prepares students to pursue employment as program coordinators in non-profits organizations, paralegals, senior software engineers/developers, IT managers, and retail store managers, among others. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median salaries in such employment contexts range from \$40,000 - \$50,000. The program has initiated various 2+2 agreements with area community colleges to enhance recruitment of transfer students. Further, several courses have now been prepared for online delivery and the program initiated an Equity Committee in 2018 to support inclusion of women and minority students to the undergraduate program.
- Major findings and recommendations: The B.A./B.S. in Philosophy program focuses on engaged learning and high impact practices including writing-intensive courses, capstone projects, research mentoring, honors thesis, independent studies, and service learning opportunities in courses offered. The program demonstrates robust enrollments (35 average per year) and is ranked fourth in the state for enrollments, with a steady increase in demand for minors (27 in Fall 2013 to 35 in Fall 2017). Although gender disparity within the program continues to be a concern, the program has made significant gains in increasing female and minority enrollment and graduation in this major. For example, during the last five years, average enrollment for women was at 31 percent (up from 21 percent) and minority enrollment was at 31 percent, up from 15 percent. Rates for degrees conferred grew from 15 percent to 24 percent for women and 7 percent to 31 percent for minority students in the program. The program demonstrates excellent assessment practices and use of data collected to make decisions regarding student learning outcomes. As a result, this program has been a model at NIU for using assessment to make continuous improvement.
- Actions taken since the last review: The program has addressed all three areas that were recommended for improvement during the last review in 2010. These include revising program requirements, increasing students' performance on analytical essay writing, and expending effort towards increasing enrollment and degrees conferred for female and minority students. Consequently, the program created: (1) the B.S. degree option developed in 2010 that, on average, graduates 29 percent of the majors in the undergraduate philosophy programs and developed (2) the accelerated 3+3 B.A./B.S. in Philosophy to Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree program in 2017. Additionally, the program conducted a comprehensive review of program requirements and course offerings, revised 20 course descriptions, deleted nine courses, and created six new courses to address the program's student learning outcomes. The program also added the junior writing sequence and the senior capstone as core course

requirements to strengthen its core curriculum. Departmental faculty made efforts to increase the representation of female and minority majors and degree recipients by following disciplinary recommendations for diversifying required readings and by making a focused effort to recruit female and minority students to the major. Average annual enrollments have increased 10 percent for females and 15 percent for minority students; degrees conferred have increased 10 percent for females and 23 percent for minority students since the last review.

- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program intends to promote its newly created 3+3 accelerated B.A./B.S. to J.D. degree program offering to top-feeder community colleges and to first- and second-year NIU students. Additionally, the program plans to increase its efforts to get its majors to take advantage of the many internship opportunities available through the office of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Student Professional Development program. Lastly, the program intends to work collaboratively with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to track graduate outcomes more closely, increase information about internship opportunities, and involve alumni for their contributions to the program.

## Outcome

- Decision:

\_\_\_x\_\_\_ Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Philosophy program demonstrates strong student outcomes, steady enrollments, numbers of degrees conferred, and high alumni satisfaction. Consistent and comprehensive assessment processes address the program's student learning outcomes and are considered a model for other undergraduate programs. Actions followed over the last review cycle have increased program viability and supported the enrollment and degree attainment of diverse groups of students.

**Program:** M.A. in Philosophy (38.0101)

## Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Master of Arts (M.A.) in Philosophy program focuses on the core areas of contemporary analytic philosophy—metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political philosophy, philosophical logic, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of science. Most graduates continue advanced work in leading doctoral programs in philosophy or teach philosophy at the community college level. Some alumni pursue additional education in fields other than philosophy and work in a wide variety of careers outside the academy (e.g., international aid, database design, data analytics, and pastoral ministry).

- Major findings and recommendations: The M.A. in Philosophy program is ranked #2 nationally for “faculty quality” among terminal M.A. programs in philosophy. *Philosophy News* reported that the program has the 3rd-best record of doctoral-program placement among terminal M.A. programs in philosophy. Eighty-eight percent of NIU graduates who applied in the last 10 years were placed into top-50 doctoral programs in philosophy, with full funding. Faculty productivity is high in terms of journal articles and conference proceedings per faculty member. Demand for the program, as measured by the high annual volume of applications (third most among the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences graduate programs, and tenth most among all NIU graduate programs) is strong. Graduates have good success entering Ph.D. programs and alumni report high satisfaction with the program. Enrollments have remained stable since 2013 (28 students) to 2017 (27 students) while degrees conferred have started to inch upwards (10 in 2013 to 14 in 2017). Programmatic assessment practices to inform student learning outcomes are strong and have informed significant changes to increase 2-year completion rates from 68 percent to 92 percent over the review period. The program’s strong assessment practices have made it a model for using assessment results to make continuous program improvements. Gender disparity and diversity of the student body continues to be a challenge to be addressed.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, the program’s main focus area for action is recruitment of diverse and underrepresented students by: (1) intentional and aggressive recruitment of underrepresented students through robust offers of funding support, and (2) collaboration with NIU’s Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Director of Communications from the college to market the M.A. program to students at other colleges and universities with large numbers of underrepresented students. The program also intends to apply for a University Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Postdoctoral Fellowship to support these efforts.

## Outcome

- Decision:

  x   Program in good standing (review in eight years).

Explanation: The Master of Arts in Philosophy program has an excellent national reputation and demonstrates steady enrollments, high numbers of degrees conferred, and strong student outcomes. It provides solid foundational and research training that serves as a pipeline to various doctoral programs. The program’s assessment processes are strong and comprehensive, and the program has clearly developed mechanisms for ongoing continuous improvement.

**Center:** Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic (90.5102)

Major Findings and Recommendations:

- Major changes in the program: The Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic (SLHC) is the teaching, research, and service unit of the Doctor of Audiology Program (Au.D.) and the M.A. in Communicative Disorders, specialization in Speech-Language Pathology Program (SLP) within the School of Allied Health and Communicative Disorders (AHCD). The SLHC operations encompass providing clinical laboratory experiences to graduate students, and providing specialized clinical services rendered by graduate students under the supervision of Clinical Assistant Professors. Typically a nominal fee is charged on a sliding scale for service rendered. The specialized clinical services include consultations and diagnosis of hearing and balance concerns, cognitive-communication, swallowing disorders, and other language and audiology related concerns such as tinnitus evaluation and treatment, balance evaluations, and cochlear implant evaluations. In addition to honing their skills in clinical practice, students gain training on topics such as importance of protecting client health information and billing practices using the Point and Click Electronic Health Records system. The SLHC generates over \$700,000 annually in clinic revenue, which offsets the costs associated with SLHC operations.
- Major findings and recommendations: The current review reflected the services provided by the SLHC as a laboratory, and critical component of the Communication Disorders academic program. SLHC has continuing partnerships with local community early intervention services, NIU's Child Development and Family Center, other developmental labs, and area school districts to provide services to over 3,500 NIU students and community members. Recently, the SLHC received an internal grant from the College of Health and Human Sciences to study and implement telehealth services, an area of expansion for the clinic. Overall, the SLHC maintains a stellar reputation within the local community as a service provider and clinical faculty within the clinic have presented research and clinical cases, at local, national and international forums.
- Actions taken since the last review: Since the last review, the SLHC hired a Clinical Assistant Professor, purchased an Audiology Video Head Impulse Testing (vHit) machine, initiated provision of in-home early intervention services, and has offered summer camps for children with articulation and language delays and disorders. These activities have helped the SLHC grow its capacity to provide services, expand breadth of training experiences for graduate students, and further enhance its reputation as a reliable clinic within the DeKalb area.
- Actions taken as a result of this review: As a result of the current review, SLHC intends to continue growing its early intervention services, expand telehealth services to train students and provide service to a wider base of clients, and offer enhanced bilingual feeding therapy SLP services. Furthermore, SHLC intends to enhance marketing efforts to grow current service offerings and provide students with a more opportunities for practice and training.

## Outcome

- Decision:

\_\_x\_\_ Center is in good standing (review in eight years).

- Explanation: The Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic (SLHC) provides an excellent teaching environment for students and has a strong reputation within the community for the services it provides.